



# CAGE-FREE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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**RECOMMENDED**

# Research Report:

## Cage-free in the Middle East

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*Note to readers: Our research is mainly aimed at AIM decision-makers and participants in our programs and is geared toward finding the best ideas for incubation. Reports on ideas that have not been recommended for incubation can often be less polished, given our commitment to focus on recommended ideas.*

We are grateful to the experts from the Open Wing Alliance and the Humane League who took the time to offer their thoughts on this research.

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## Executive summary

**Cage-free campaigns are the most successful efforts of the animal advocacy movement to date.** On a global level, 2,625 cage-free commitments have been made so far. 1,157 of these corporate pledges are now fully implemented across Europe, the UK, and in the US impacting 220 million hens.

However, despite this global progress, there are still many countries in which layer hens are suffering in the extreme confinement of battery or furnished cages without existing organizations or campaigns. Removing hens from cages is net-good for their welfare: it gives them the freedom to move and the freedom to express their natural behaviors. It avoids many other welfare issues like peritonitis, muscle atrophy, stress and fear. The Welfare Footprint Project estimates that removing hens from cages can reduce their suffering by ~40%. We have high confidence that this suffering can be averted with new cage-free campaigns.

**We want to see a new organization working on cage-free corporate campaigns in the Middle East.** We have already seen progress being made in the region by Kafessiz Türkiye in Türkiye, but we think that a focus on the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt could be particularly promising for a new organization as there are currently no existing organizations working there.

**It will be necessary for a new organization to take the “good cop” approach.** It may even be beneficial for the organization to frame itself as a consultancy presenting corporations (particularly retailers) with a business opportunity to sell “high quality” and “high welfare” egg products as this market doesn’t yet exist, but consumers have the money and likely the willingness to pay for these kinds of products (as they already pay often 2x+ more for things like eggs fortified with Omega 3 and Vitamin D). Starting work in the United Arab Emirates could be particularly promising as the country wants to be the leader of the Gulf States and cage-free progress there may spark progress in other countries leveraging strong existing competitive dynamics in the region.

A new charity working on cage-free campaigning in the Middle East should be fairly easy to implement and has a clear theory of change. We also expect this work to be quite cost-effective, averting ~30 suffering-adjusted days per dollar (SADs/\$).

**Overall, we think that this is an idea worth recommending to founders.** Note that we also initially considered launching new broiler welfare campaigns in neglected countries, but prioritized new cage-free campaigns instead as we think that they would have more promise. We move the analysis of broiler welfare campaigns to Annex 1.

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# 1 Introduction

**This report evaluates the idea of a new charity focused on good-cop corporate campaigning for cage-free farming in neglected countries in the Middle East, and its promise for the Charity Entrepreneurship Incubation Program.**

**This report has been produced by Ambitious Impact (AIM).** AIM's mission is to cause more effective charities to exist in the world by connecting talented individuals with high-impact intervention opportunities. We achieve this goal through an extensive research process and our Incubation Program.

**This process began by sourcing hundreds of ideas for potential new charities from members of the animal advocacy movement, then gradually narrowing them down and examining them in increasing depth.** In order to assess how promising interventions would be for future charity entrepreneurs, we use a variety of different decision tools such as group consensus decision-making, weighted factor models, cost-effectiveness analyses, quality of evidence assessments, case study analysis, and expert interviews.

**This process is exploratory and rigorous but not comprehensive – we did not research all ideas in depth.** As such, our decision not to take forward a non-profit idea to the point of writing a full report does not reflect a view that the concept is not good.

## 2 Background

The cage-free transition has progressed through policy change and corporation commitments from conventional cages (also known as battery cages) where egg-laying hens suffer extreme confinement in a space smaller than an A4 sheet of paper (430 to 450 cm<sup>2</sup> per bird), to furnished cages where the space afforded to each bird is slightly larger (~750 cm<sup>2</sup> per bird), to cage-free systems ([Welfare Footprint Project, 2021](#); [European Commission, 1999](#)).

Progress across this transition varies by region, with cage-free progress being greatest in Europe and the US. As per the latest numbers from 2023, the proportion of birds in the cage-free system is at 80%, 60%, and 39% in the UK, the EU, and the US, respectively ([Bollard, 2023](#)).

**Table 1: Caged and cage-free hen distribution in Europe and the US**

Region	Caged hens	Cage-free hens	Caged hens %	Cage-free hens %
UK and EU	163,334,165	264,001,247	40% (EU); 20% (UK)	60% (EU); 80% (UK)
USA	237,049,560	145,288,440	61%	39%

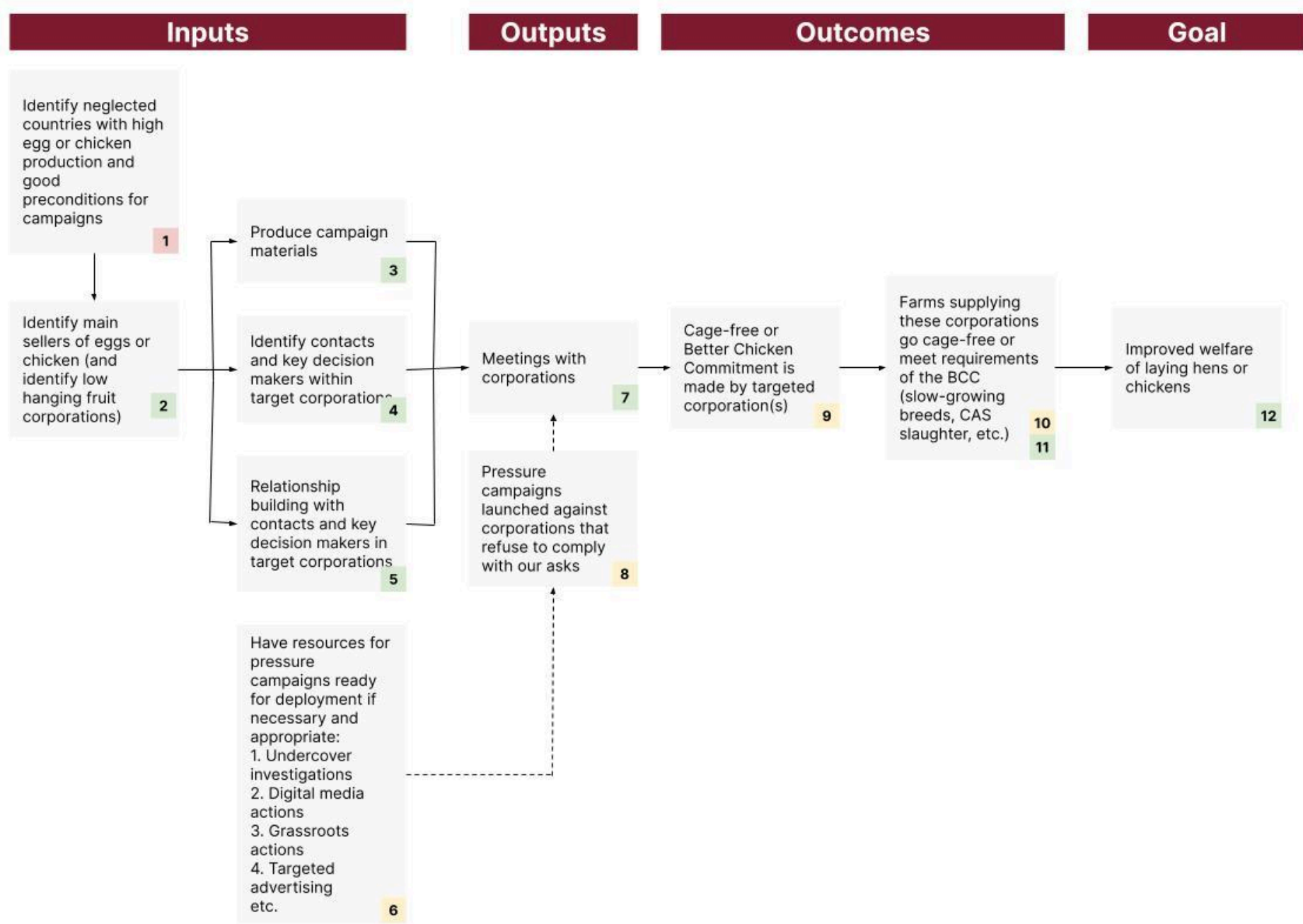
However, outside of Europe and the US, most laying hens still spend their lives suffering in cages. There is much more work to do around the globe until every cage is empty.

## 3 Theory of change

### 3.1 Causal chain and assumptions

We want to see a new charity launching corporate campaigns in new, previously neglected countries. These campaigns can either be cage-free campaigns, or broiler welfare (Better Chicken Commitment) campaigns, depending on the country.

Below we outline the theory of change for this intervention, and the assumptions being made across the theory of change. These assumptions are color-coded based on our certainty in them where **green** is high certainty, **yellow** is moderate certainty, and **red** is low certainty.





## Inputs

1. We will be able to identify promising new, neglected countries to launch new corporate campaigns in.

2. We can identify target corporations based on their scale and tractability.

3. We can create persuasive campaign materials.

4 and 5. We will be able to identify and build relationships with key decision makers within the target corporation(s).

6. If necessary and appropriate, we have the resources (eg. volunteers, footage from investigations) and ability to launch pressure campaigns

## Outputs

7. Our campaign materials and connections are persuasive enough to get meetings with corporations without launching a public-facing pressure campaign

8. If necessary, public-facing pressure campaigns force corporations to meet with us by eg. damaging their reputation

## Outcomes

9. Meetings and materials (and potential pressure campaign) are persuasive enough for corporations to commit

10. Commitments are actually enforced and followed through with

11. Farmers are able to implement cage-free or BCC requirements on their farms

## Goal

12. Removing layer hens from cages is better for their welfare  
OR  
The necessary reforms under the BCC (eg. slow-growing breeds, CAS slaughter) are better for broiler welfare than current standards

## 3.2 Key questions for evidence review

We focus on the most uncertain assumptions outlined above and try to resolve these with the following questions that will form our evidence review:

1. Can we identify promising, new neglected countries to launch new corporate campaigns in?
2. Are "bad-cop" pressure tactics appropriate in the chosen target country?
3. Will corporations actually commit to our asks?
4. Will our asks actually be enforced on farms?
5. Are farmers able to implement our asks?

There is also another important question to resolve, although we are certain that it holds true, as it is key to the whole intervention:

6. Is being removed from a cage good for welfare?

## 4 Quality of evidence

### 4.1 Evidence that a charity can make a change in this space

#### 4.1.1 Can we identify promising, new neglected countries to launch new corporate campaigns in?

This will be the focus of our geographic assessment in [Section 6](#). We will attempt to identify promising countries by using a case study of recent success in running new cage-free campaigns in a previously neglected country: Kafessiz Türkiye working in Türkiye.

We have hypothesized that the following factors play into the success of this organization, alongside the talent and dedication of their team:

- The country is a (U)MIC.
  - We will also consider HICs if there are any that are neglected.
- The country has a high level of exports to the EU.
- There is a fairly centralized market of producers and retailers in the country.
- Consumers have a decent per capita income such that they can afford to pay more for higher welfare products.
- There is some existing market for high welfare and some existing certification
- There are potential high rates of public interest, such as high rates of veganism etc.

#### 4.1.2 Are “bad-cop” pressure tactics appropriate in the chosen target country?

We will explicitly consider this question for each promising target geography identified by our geographic assessment in [Section 6](#).

#### 4.1.3 Will corporations actually commit to our asks?

As the most common intervention being implemented by the animal movement as a whole, cage-free corporate campaigning is probably the area where we have the most

evidence and certainty in the whole animal advocacy movement. There has been a lot of good research done on the promise of cage-free corporate campaigns<sup>1</sup>:

- [Corporate campaigns affect 9 to 120 years of chicken life per dollar spent](#)
- [35 Independent Pieces of Evidence for Why New Corporate Campaigns Might \(or Might Not\) Work](#)
- [Did corporate campaigns in the US have any counterfactual impact? A quantitative model](#)
- [Founders Pledge Cause Area Report: Corporate Campaigns for Animal Welfare](#)
- [Why Are the US Corporate Cage-Free Campaigns Succeeding?](#)
- [Initial Grants to Support Corporate Cage-free Reforms](#)

So far, 2,620 commitments have been made globally ([Chicken Watch, 2024](#)). The progress per continent is outlined in Table 2 below. Note that the total number of campaigns per continent as outlined in Table 2 may sum to more than 2,620 commitments as a corporate commitment may be made by a corporation for their sales in North America AND Europe, and so it would be counted for both continents.

**Table 2: Total number of cage-free commitments by continent**

Continent	Number of cage-free commitments ( <a href="#">Chicken Watch, 2024</a> )
Africa	94
Asia	303
Europe	1,452
Latin and South America	514
Middle East	2
North America	602
Oceania	171
Global	159

We can also look to existing animal advocacy organizations to get a sense of the success rate when running a campaign against any given corporation:

- The Humane League, working in the US, UK, Mexico, and Japan, has an average success rate of ~29% ([Animal Charity Evaluators, 2023a](#))

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is an illustrative list, it is not meant to be exhaustive.

- Campaigned against 166 companies to secure global cage-free commitments, 25 were won.
- Campaigned against 10 companies internationally to secure cage-free commitments, 9 were won.
- Campaigned against one organization in Mexico to secure a cage-free commitment, but this was not won.
- Campaigned against 39 companies in Japan to secure cage-free commitments, 5 were won.
- Sinergia Animal, working in Indonesia, Thailand, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru, has an average success rate of 30% as it ran 40 campaigns and secured 12 commitments ([Animal Charity Evaluators, 2022a](#)).

#### 4.1.4 Will our asks actually be enforced on farms?

1,157 corporate pledges are now fully implemented across Europe and the US ([Bollard, 2023](#)). This is 89% of the pledges that were due by 2023 or earlier ([Open Wing Alliance, 2024a](#)). This is a higher follow-through rate than we were expecting to see. Early estimates of follow-through rates put the expected enforcement at ~44%-64% ([Šimčikas, 2019](#); [Sarek, 2019](#)).

#### 4.1.5 Are farmers able to implement our asks?

Cage-free has already been implemented by many farmers. 220 million layer hens have already been removed from cages across Europe and the US, with 1,157 corporate pledges now fully implemented ([Bollard, 2023](#)).

This progress has been made in just the last decade, as these campaigns largely began in 2015. In this time, we have seen cage-free progress from 6% to 39% of total production in the US, 41% to 60% of total production in Europe, and 48% to 80% of total production in the UK ([Bollard, 2023](#)).

## 4.2 Evidence that the change has the expected welfare benefits

Removing hens from cages is clearly good for their welfare as it gives them the freedom to move and the freedom to express their natural behaviors and avoids many

other welfare issues like peritonitis, muscle atrophy, and stress and fear ([Welfare Footprint Project, 2021](#)).

Removing hens from cages is expected to reduce their suffering by an average of ~40% ([Welfare Footprint Project, 2021](#)).<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1: Hours in pain endured by average flock member as a result of major harms affecting commercial layers, by housing system**



<sup>2</sup> Note that this is removing layers from furnished cages to cage-free aviaries, as battery cages have already been banned in a lot of countries. Removing hens from battery cages would have an even bigger reduction in their overall suffering.

## 5 Expert views

### 5.1 Open Wing Alliance regional staff

**Profile:** We spoke with various staff members at the Open Wing Alliance (OWA) to ask them for general advice. We spoke with:

- Annie Evans, Associate Director of OWA, EMEA
- Noa Limpoco, Senior OWA Asia Lead
- Mariana Arellano Corbello, Senior OWA Latin America Lead
- Aurelia Adhiambo, OWA Africa Lead

### 5.2 Anonymous animal advocate from The Humane League

**Profile:** We spoke with someone who has worked in corporate campaigning at The Humane League for a long time. He wished for his views to remain anonymous.

**Key takeaways:**

- There is lots of room for more cage-free work in neglected countries. He thinks that work in the Middle East could be especially promising as this is largely neglected outside of Turkey and Israel and the industry is smaller and weaker there than we are used to in Europe and the US as the first Middle Eastern poultry associated only formed a few years ago.
- However, he also said that ensuring the follow-through of existing commitments is more important at this point in time than getting new commitments.

### 5.3 Giovanni Fabris, The Humane League

**Profile:** Giovanni is the Global Research and Insights Lead at The Humane League. Giovanni does research to inform the campaigns of both The Humane League and the Open Wing Alliance and to track the progress of existing cage-free and BCC commitments.

**Key takeaways:**

- Giovanni has analyzed the egg and broiler market in the United Arab Emirates. He thinks cage-free work could be particularly promising here.

- There are no known organizations working on farmed animal welfare here, but leading retailer Majid al Futtaim (a Carrefour subsidiary for the Middle East and Africa) has a cage-free commitment that could be used as a leverage opportunity with other retailers.
- Given high disposable income, strong sales of value-added "higher quality" products (like eggs fortified with Omega 3 and Vitamin D), the cage-free concept being completely absent, and the EU being seen as the gold standard in various products and in the process of banning cages which could be used as leverage, it seems like cage-free stands a chance of gaining traction easily.
  - Value-added eggs are sold at a big premium (often 2x+).
  - There are organic and free-range eggs, but no mention of cage-free
- It is impossible to run protests or pressure campaigns in the UAE, but something like "Compassion in World Farming UAE" in the role of business partner/good cop may be enough to create progress
- UAE wants to be the leader of the Gulf States and cage-free progress there may spark progress in other countries (Saudi, Bahrain, Qatar?) leveraging strong existing competitive dynamics.
- Potential low-hanging fruit:
  - Waitrose seems to sell cage eggs at its 15 UAE locations, operated by high-end local chain Spinney's, despite it being 100% cage-free in the UK since 2008
  - LuLu, a global retailer based in UAE, also sells cage eggs and has no commitment (opportunity to run OWA global campaign)
- Thinks that disposable income may facilitate the success of cage-free and other welfare campaigns, so he thinks that campaigns in Central America will likely be less promising as people are generally poorer and so may not have the money to buy higher-welfare animal products.



## 6 Geographic assessment

[See our full geograophic assessment here.](#)

### 6.1 Where existing organizations work

In our geographic weighted factor model, we exclude countries that already have member organizations from the Open Wing Alliance working in them. The Open Wing Alliance is an alliance of organizations, led by the Humane League, that focuses on cage-free and broiler welfare campaigns. The Open Wing Alliance has member organizations from over 70 countries. These member organizations are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Countries with Open Wing Alliance member organizations**

List of countries with Open Wing Alliance member organizations, as of June 2024 ( <a href="#">Open Wing Alliance, 2024c</a> )						
Argentina	Australia	Austria	Belgium	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Botswana	Brazil
Bulgaria	Cameroon	Canada	Chile	Colombia	Czechia	Denmark
Ecuador	Estonia	Eswatini	Finland	France	Germany	Ghana
Greece	Hong Kong	Hungary	India	Indonesia	Israel	Italy
Japan	Kenya	Latvia	Liberia	Lithuania	Lesotho	Malawi
Malaysia	Mexico	Mozambique	Namibia	Nepal	Netherlands	New Zealand
Nigeria	Norway	Peru	Philippines	Poland	Portugal	Romania
Russia	Rwanda	Serbia	Sierra Leone	Slovakia	Slovenia	Somalia
South Africa	South Korea	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Taiwan	Tanzania
Thailand	Türkiye	Uganda	Ukraine	UK	USA	Uruguay
Venezuela	Zambia	Zimbabwe				

### 6.2 Geographic assessment

To find promising countries we use a case study of recent success running new cage-free campaigns in a previously neglected country: Kafessiz Türkiye working in Türkiye.

We have hypothesized that the following factors play into the success of this organization, alongside the talent and dedication of their team:

- (U)MIC
  - We will also consider HICs if there are any that are neglected.
- A high level of exports to the EU.
- A fairly centralized market of producers and retailers.
- A decent per capita income such that consumers can afford to pay more for higher welfare products.
- Some existing market for high welfare and some existing certification
- High rates of public interest, such as high rates of veganism etc.

We will evaluate the top 50 egg-producing and chicken-producing countries based on the above factors to try and identify promising, neglected countries to run new corporate campaigns. We will also consider countries that were directly recommended to us by experts, if not already captured in the top producing countries (Ireland, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates).

## 6.3 Results

Our geographic assessment suggests that the following countries could be promising:

- New cage-free campaigns (ranked in order of promisingness)
  - United Arab Emirates
  - Saudi Arabia
  - South Korea
  - Vietnam
  - Bangladesh
  - Egypt
  - Kazakhstan
- New broiler welfare campaigns (ranked in order of promisingness)
  - South Korea, though it likely makes sense to start with cage-free campaigns
  - Ireland
  - Costa Rica (and other countries in Central America: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua)
  - Saudi Arabia, though it likely makes sense to start with cage-free campaigns

- United Arab Emirates, though it likely makes sense to start with cage-free campaigns
- Vietnam, though it likely makes sense to start with cage-free campaigns
- Egypt, though it likely makes sense to start with cage-free campaigns
- Bangladesh, though it likely makes sense to start with cage-free campaigns

Based on scalability considerations, where we have a preference for recommending interventions that can work in multiple countries or have other promising available pivoting options such that the focus of the charity isn't too narrow, we would prioritize the following geographies and campaigns:

1. Cage-free campaigning in the Middle East (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt), with the potential to move on to broiler welfare campaigns
  - a. Based on our expert conversations, UAE might be a good place to start as this seems to have influence over other countries in the region. Experts were also excited about Egypt as a target.
2. Broiler welfare campaigning in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua)
3. Broiler welfare campaigning in Ireland.
4. Cage-free campaigning in South Korea, with the potential to move on to broiler welfare campaigns.
5. Cage-free campaigning in Vietnam, with the potential to move on to broiler welfare campaigns.
6. Cage-free campaigning in Bangladesh, with the potential to move on to broiler welfare campaigns.

## **"Good cop" vs. "bad cop" tactics in our target geographies**

It is important to consider the local context when choosing what approach to corporate campaigning a new organization takes. We would recommend the following approaches for our target geographies:

- Cage-free campaigning in the Middle East: Based on our expert conversations, you should take a good cop approach, and perhaps even frame yourself as a consultancy presenting the corporations (particularly retailers) with a business opportunity to sell "high quality" and "high welfare" egg products as this market doesn't yet exist, but consumers have the money and likely the willingness to pay for these products (as they already pay more for things like fortified eggs). Also, as you will be the first organization working on cage-free corporate

campaigning in these countries, we think that the good cop approach is more likely to be successful as a solo actor.

- Broiler welfare campaigning in Central America: We would recommend the good cop approach here as you will be the only actor working in these countries.
- Broiler welfare campaigning in Ireland: We would recommend the bad cop approach here, and this is the more popular approach used in the UK and Europe.
- Cage-free campaigning in South Korea and Vietnam: We would recommend the bad cop approach here, particularly in South Korea, as you will be working with existing organizations in these countries who think that it could be helpful to have someone take a bad cop approach but they feel unable to do so themselves ([Cox, 2023](#)).
- Cage-free campaigning in Bangladesh: We would recommend the good cop approach here as you will be the only actor working in this country.

## 7 Cost-effectiveness analysis

[See our cost-effectiveness analysis here.](#)

### 7.1 Suffering-Adjusted Days (SADs)

#### Introduction to SADs

We have designed a new internal system for making quantitative decisions on animal welfare ideas. The system is called Suffering-Adjusted Days or SADs. It roughly represents the number of days of intense pain felt by each animal.

It is essentially a measure of days in pain with various adjustments for:

- Intensity of pain
- Sentience
- Welfare range

SADs are adjusted to “disabling” levels of pain on the Welfare Footprint pain scale ([Welfare Footprint Project, n.d.](#)). So 1 day spent in disabling pain for 1 human would be equal to 1 SAD.

This is to replace and improve our welfare points (WP) system that CE has been using for the past few years ([Savoie and Sarek, 2018](#); [Sarek, 2018](#)). There is no easy way to convert between the old and new systems. If you are comparing our old reports to our new reports we suggest you consider a SAD as similar or just a bit lower in value than a WP (e.g. 1 WP → 0.8 SADs) although this will depend heavily on the specific of the intervention.

The new system is designed to be iterative and grows in usefulness with time. Each time we do an in-depth look into a farmed animal welfare scenario (e.g. *farmed rodents*, or *farmed carp with stocking density limits applied*) we will calculate the SADs in that case and add it to a database for future use.

#### How SADs are calculated

Currently, SADs are calculated as follows:

$$SADs = SADs_1 * w_1 + SADs_2 * w_2 = S * WR * (WF * MW * w_1 + \Delta MR * PD_0 * w_2)$$

This is a weighted average of two different estimates, with weights  $w_1$  and  $w_2$ . The main estimate is:

$$SADs_1 = S * WR * WF * MW$$

**S = Sentience** = Sentience estimates based on CE's old estimates and estimates from Open Philanthropy and Rethink Priorities, weighted by our credence in each estimate.

**WR = Welfare range** = Welfare range (adjusted and not adjusted for neuron count) as taken from [Rethink Priorities' work](#) (from the "Mixture" tabs). These are weighted by our credence in each estimate, including our credence that these should not be used on top of sentience weightings). The welfare range of an animal speaks to its theoretical capacity for welfare given sentience, but not actual welfare experiences ([Fischer, 2023](#)).

**WF = Welfare footprint** = Time in pain caused by different welfare issues for an average animal on a 1-4 scale where 0 = No pain, 1 = Annoying pain, 2 = Hurtful pain, 3 = Disabling pain, and 4 = Excruciating pain, using the welfare footprint's definitions and system. They are weighted by our moral weight (MW).

**MW = Moral weight** = Academic and team and expert views on the equivalence of each category of pain with disabling pain.

We put less weight on our secondary estimate. The secondary estimate works by comparing mortality rates and assuming mortality is proportional to welfare. Essentially we consider the SADs in a default scenario for an animal then adjust up or down proportional to the change in mortality for a given intervention. So:

$$SADs_2 = S * WR * \Delta MR * PD_0$$

**PD<sub>0</sub> = Default scenario intensity-adjusted pain days** = WF \* MW in the scenario designated as the default scenario for that animal.

**ΔMR = Change in Mortality Rate** = The ratio of the mortality rate in the current scenario to the mortality rate in the default scenario for that animal.

## 7.2 Effects

The endline effect measured is the Suffering Adjusted Days (SADs) averted via the intervention. The factors considered to measure this endline metric are:

1. Number of layer hens farmed in the target country, calculated by dividing the total production of eggs by the egg yield per animal. We also consider annual growth rates of the industry to project the number of animals farmed in the future.
2. The expected reach of these campaigns is calculated in two different ways and a weighted average of these two estimates is taken

- a. Probability of success \* The percentage of production that we can expect to shift to cage-free after 10 years of campaigning, based on the cage-free rate in the US, EU, and UK in 2023 after almost a decade of campaigning.
  - b. Probability of success \* % of production that targeted corporations make up \* Adjustment to account for the fact that corporations will continue to be targeted in future years even if they don't initially commit \* Expected enforcement rate of corporate campaigns (based on previous estimates and actual enforcement of cage-free commitments in Europe and the US with deadlines of 2023 or earlier).
3. An adjustment of 24% to account for expected progress being slower outside of Europe and the US where we've used progress in the US vs progress in Latin America as a proxy.
  4. SADs averted per animal.
  5. Annual chance that this would happen without a new charity.
  6. Many countries have both good and bad cop actors working in them, and it is generally thought that you need both the good cop and bad cop approach to achieve change (unless you are working in a country where the bad cop approach is not appropriate). Therefore, we may expect it to be more difficult to make progress if you are the only actor in a country and you are taking the good cop approach. We use an adjustment of 45% which is calculated by looking at the average number of commitments (per org) achieved in countries with just a good cop actor vs. those in countries with both good and bad cop actors.

## 7.3 Costs

The total costs for running the program are calculated which includes these following factors:

- a. Total fixed costs in Year 1 and total fixed costs at scale of \$130,000 and \$280,000 respectively, which is held constant between all CEAs.
- b. Total variable costs of ~\$198,000 for the costs of running corporate campaigns, based on the budgets of The Humane League, Shrimp Welfare Project, Sinergia Animal and Kafessiz Türkiye ([Animal Charity Evaluators, 2023a](#); [Animal Charity Evaluators, 2023b](#); [Animal Charity Evaluators, 2022a](#); [Animal Charity Evaluators, 2022b](#)). These costs were then adjusted by the purchasing power parity of the modelled country as we expect campaigns to be cheaper to run in Honduras, for example, than in the US.

## 7.4 Results

We note that these results could be an underestimate as we have conservatively assumed that there will be no impact until the deadline of the commitment is met, which is 10 years after the charity begins campaigning.

Based on our cost-effectiveness estimate, a new charity running new cage-free corporate campaigns in the Middle East could be moderately cost-effective. With an average budget of ~\$400,000 per year at scale, the charity is expected to avert ~3.2-25.1 million SADs per year at scale. Discounting for future costs and benefits, the charity is expected to operate at an average cost-effectiveness of averting **~30 SADs/\$**.



## 8 Implementation

### 8.1 What does working on this idea look like?

As we recommend that the charity takes a good-cop approach to this work in the Middle East, the main focus of your day-to-day work will be on relationship building with key contacts and key decision-makers in target corporations. Everything else that you do, such as producing campaign materials and identifying new contacts, will be in service of this as these relationships will ultimately be what land you meetings with your target corporations and it is in these meetings that we expect commitments to be made. Note that we expect some of these commitments to take a long time to achieve, especially as you will not have a bad cop organization to complement your efforts and apply pressure when corporations are refusing to commit, but you will need to continue to work at these relationships until they do agree to go cage-free.

We can look at previous success factors from the US where advocates worked cooperatively with companies to adopt cage-free policies to provide a sort of “playbook” for your work in the Middle East ([Bollard, 2017](#)):

- Identifying key decision makers at large food companies (sometimes through working with supporters of cage-free reforms within each target company) and building relationships with these key people over a long period of time.
- Leveraging existing cage-free progress, particularly in corporations that have already made commitments in other regions but not in the Middle East.
  - For example, Waitrose seems to sell cage eggs at its 15 UAE locations, operated by high-end local chain Spinney's, despite it being 100% cage-free in the UK since 2008 and LuLu, a global retailer based in UAE, also sells cage eggs and has no commitment.
  - We also expect that progress in the EU could be a good point of leverage in the UAE as it usually looks to the EU as the gold standard for other products
- Filing “laudatory” shareholder proposals thanking companies that have made commitments for their work in progressing animal welfare in the region to help these companies to see themselves as pro-animal. This could potentially create animal welfare champions within the industry and could leverage competitive dynamics within each sector.
- Providing technical assistance and support to company food buyers to help them develop and implement cage-free policies appropriate for their companies. This may involve holding days-long sessions with each company that needs assistance.

- Placing adverts in industry news outlets when a new company makes a cage-free commitment to both affirm the company's decision to go cage-free and to signal the trend to the company's peers.
- You could also consider taking a sector-by-sector focus to build up competitive pressure within each industry for corporations lagging behind to follow their peers. In the US, they first worked with food service companies, then fast food chains, then food manufacturers, and finally retailers and grocers.

The most analogous organizations to what we imagine a new organization would look like is Compassion in World Farming/Compassion in Food Business. A more Charity Entrepreneurship-relevant example would be Shrimp Welfare Project, as although they are advocating for a completely different animal they are employing these tactics very successfully to push for humane slaughter for billions of shrimps.

## 8.2 Key factors

This section summarizes our concerns (or lack thereof) about different aspects of a new charity's implementation of this idea.

**Table 4: Implementation concerns**

Factor	How concerning is this?
Talent	Low concern
Access to information	Moderate concern
Access to relevant stakeholders	Low concern
Feedback loops	Low concern
Funding	Low concern
Scale of the problem	Low concern
Neglectedness	Low concern
Execution difficulty/Tractability	Low concern
Negative externalities	Low concern
Positive externalities	Low concern

## Talent

We do not expect talent to be a bottleneck as we think that a skilled generalist could easily learn to do this work, especially as we think that good cop campaigning will be easier to learn – and more suitable for more people on average – than bad cop campaigning. It would be ideal to find at least one local co-founder, and to find founders who have worked in corporate campaigning in the past. However, these are just nice-to-haves, not a necessity.

## Access

### Access to information

It may be difficult to determine how many layer hens are going to be affected by each corporate commitment as this information is not easily accessible online.

It may be the case that corporations could tell you this directly either by letting you know how many birds they farm or by telling you something about their market size, or you might be able to work this out through your conversations. You could also potentially try and use proxies once you know how many hens are in a certain corporation's supply chain by comparing each corporation in size to the corporation you have information about. However, unless you get this information directly from the corporation this will always be imperfect information.

### Access to relevant stakeholders

We do not foresee any obvious access barriers. When communicating with corporations it may be beneficial to frame yourself as a consultancy presenting them with a business opportunity. Under this framework, we would expect corporations to be very willing to speak with you.

## Feedback loops

An obvious feedback loop would be the number of corporations making cage-free commitments. Before the commitments are made, you can also track the number of meetings you are having.

However, obviously, the number of commitments isn't actually what matters. We need to ensure that these commitments are actually being implemented and that hens are actually being freed from cages. To track this progress, we think that you could consider adding a requirement to the commitment that corporations are making that,

on top of going cage-free, they will also report cage-free progress each year. These sorts of progress reporting requirements are quite rare in cage-free commitments, though not totally unheard of. For example, in 2021 Palladium Hotel Group made a commitment to go cage-free globally by 2025. As part of this commitment, they stated that they will “publicly report on progress in fulfilling this commitment” ([Chicken Watch, 2021](#)). However, progress reporting is explicitly part of the European Chicken Commitment, which adds a sixth requirement on top of the five outlined in [Annex 1](#) for the Better Chicken Commitment in the US where corporations must “demonstrate compliance with the above standards via third-party auditing and annual public reporting on progress towards this commitment” ([betterchickencommitment, n.d.a.](#)).

Not all companies are following the requirement for third-party auditing or annual reporting on progress, but some are, and you can likely pressure those that are not reporting (as long as this isn't seen as too “bad-cop”, but Compassion in Food Business have managed to do this in the EU whilst still being seen as a “good-cop”). Table 5 outlines the number of corporations that are complying with the third-party auditing and annual progress reporting requirements on the European Chicken Commitment.

**Table 5: Organizations that are following the requirements for third-party auditing and annual reporting in Europe, by sector ([Compassion in Food Business, 2023](#))**

Sector	Third-party auditing		Annual progress reports
	Companies reporting	Progress	Companies reporting
Retailers and meal kits	6/33 (18%)	18.8%	21/33 (64%)
Food service and hospitality	2/14 (14%)	21.8%	8/14 (57%)
Restaurants	0	N/A	15/23 (65%)
Manufacturers	2/9 (22%)	0%	6/9 (67%)
Producers	0	N/A	5/6 (83%)

## Funding

Funding is unlikely to be a bottleneck as cage-free corporate campaigns are the most well-funded intervention in the animal movement, with Open Philanthropy giving \$38.6

million to date for cage-free corporate campaigns globally since 2016 ([Open Philanthropy, 2024](#)).

We do note, however, that most of this funding will likely come from Effective Altruist sources so you may want to consider the counterfactuals of this funding and try and get funding from donors who are explicitly interested in giving to interventions in the Middle East. We do not have a good sense of how easy it will be to find this alternative funding.

## Scale of the problem

Although progress has been made globally, many countries still lack active animal advocacy organizations working to free hens from cages.

In our target countries—the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt—over 73 million egg-laying hens were farmed in 2022 ([Our World in Data, 2022a](#); [Our World in Data, 2022b](#)).<sup>3</sup> We expect most of the hens farmed in the UAE and Saudi Arabia to be in battery cages as they are not banned, and in Egypt we expect up to 50% of hens to be in battery cages and the other 50% to already be cage-free ([Global Coalition for Animal Welfare, 2023](#)).

We also think that this intervention is quite scalable, as we have recommended three target countries within the region as an initial target. Work in the UAE may also have leverage in other Gulf countries that see it as a leader (such as Bahrain and Qatar) so you could also consider work in these countries as they might be low-hanging fruit. Once you have made sufficient cage-free progress, you can also move on to broiler welfare campaigns with the same team and using the momentum of your cage-free wins.

## Neglectedness

There are currently no organizations working on cage-free campaigning in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt. The Open Wing Alliance are also not actively recruiting new members now or in the short-term, so it is unlikely that this work would happen in the next few years without a new organization.

However, we do note that cage-free campaigns are the obvious campaign for a new organization to work on if one were to start in these countries independent of us, so

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the number of hens farmed was calculated by dividing the total egg production by the egg yield per hen in the given country.

we have discounted our cost-effectiveness analysis by a 5% annual chance that this would happen anyway without our work.

## Tractability

We have explicitly chosen our target countries based on their expected tractability. There are many reasons to believe that corporate campaigns in the Middle East will be tractable, particularly in the United Arab Emirates. As Giovanni Fabris noted in our expert interview, we expect the UAE to be a particularly promising country because:

- People have a high disposable income, which is likely a predictor of success as people will be more able to purchase higher-welfare animal products
- There are strong sales of value-added “higher quality” products (like eggs fortified with Omega 3 and Vitamin D) which shows their willingness to pay
- The cage-free concept is currently completely absent, but the EU is seen as the gold standard and is in the process of banning cages. This could be used as leverage.
- UAE wants to be the leader of the Gulf States and cage-free progress there may spark progress in other countries (Saudi, Bahrain, Qatar?) leveraging strong existing competitive dynamics in the region.
- There are some potential low-hanging fruit corporations that could be our first targets
  - Waitrose seems to sell cage eggs at its 15 UAE locations, operated by high-end local chain Spinney’s, despite it being 100% cage-free in the UK since 2008
  - LuLu, a global retailer based in UAE, also sells cage eggs and has no commitment

## Externalities

The main positive externality we expect is that work in the UAE could have precedent-setting effects across the Gulf countries and make cage-free progress there easier. We do not anticipate any large negative externalities from this work.

## 9 Conclusion

Overall our view is that good-cop cage-free campaigning in the Middle East is an idea worth recommending to future charity founders. We think that there is a lot of promise in applying the tried-and-tested approach of corporate campaigning to a new, neglected region. We also think that there are many reasons to believe that the Middle East could be a promising target region, particularly the United Arab Emirates.

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## Annex 1 – Broiler welfare campaigns

### Background: Broiler welfare – Better Chicken Commitment

After cage-free campaigns, broiler welfare campaigns are the next most common intervention implemented by existing organizations. When organizations have made sufficient progress on cage-free, they also start campaigning for improved broiler welfare standards.

The Better Chicken Commitment (also referred to as the European Chicken Commitment) is a new test for the movement as, unlike cage-free, it is not a single ask, instead being a combination of five asks ([betterchickencommitment.com](https://betterchickencommitment.com), n.d.b.):

1. Use only BCC-approved, slower-growing breeds, that demonstrate higher welfare outcomes<sup>4</sup>.
2. A maximum stocking density of 6lbs/sqft (30kg/m<sup>2</sup>) and prohibit all forms of broiler cages.
3. Provision of an improved baseline environment, including:
  - a. At least 3 inches of friable litter covering the whole floor, managed to maintain dry, friable condition and prevent caked or wet areas.
  - b. A minimum 8 hours of continuous light ( $\geq 50$  lux) and 6 hours of continuous darkness daily ( $< 1$  lux)
  - c. One or more types of functional enrichment (such as perches, platforms, or straw bales) that multiple birds can use at any time. The enrichments must be available by 10 days old and maintained thereafter, dispersed throughout the house, and available to the entire flock with 1 enrichment for every 1,000 sq. ft or 1 enrichment per 1000 birds, at a minimum.
4. Process chickens in a manner that avoids pre-stun handling and instead utilizes a multi-step controlled-atmosphere processing system that includes an irreversible stun.
5. Demonstrate compliance with all standards via third-party auditing and annual public reporting on progress toward this commitment.

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<sup>4</sup> Breeds that have been approved for use to meet the BCC: JA757, JACY57, JA787, JA957, JA987, JACY87, or Norfolk Black; Rowan Ranger, Rambler Ranger, Ranger Classic, Ranger Premium, or Ranger Gold; REDBRO, RedbroM; Cobb-Sasso 200 (CS200), Cooks Venture Pioneer, or others that pass the breed welfare outcome assessments by either the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) or Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) ([betterchickencommitment.com](https://betterchickencommitment.com), n.d.).

## Evidence that a charity can make a change in this space

### Will corporations actually commit to our asks?

Progress has been slower than we had hoped on the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC), with companies being more hesitant to commit. We are unsure why exactly this is, but some leading hypotheses are that: there was a delay in approving breeds for use under the commitment which stalled progress; corporations are starting to become tired of corporate campaigns; and it is more difficult to ask for a combination of asks rather than just a single ask (as this is typically more expensive).

Nevertheless, we have still seen some good progress with a total of 625 commitments made globally so far ([Chicken Watch, 2024](#)). The progress per continent is outlined in Table 6.

**Table 6: Total number of Better Chicken Commitments/European Chicken Commitments by continent**

Continent	Number of Better Chicken Commitments ( <a href="#">Chicken Watch, 2024</a> )
Africa	0
Asia	1
Europe	384
Latin and South America	0
Middle East	0
North America	238
Oceania	11
Global	4

We were unable to find data on the number of corporations targeted and what percentage of these actually made commitments. We would expect the success rate to be lower than for cage-free as we have generally seen slower progress for BCC campaigns than for cage-free campaigns.

## Will our asks actually be enforced on farms?

Most progress on broiler welfare campaigns has been made in Europe and the US as these were the regions that made the most progress on cage-free campaigning and so were the first to move on to the Better Chicken Commitment as their next campaign. However, although the deadline for many of the first BCC commitments made across Europe and the US is 2026, we haven't seen the same progress as we had with cage-free at this stage.

In the US, 52 companies are reporting their progress on implementing this commitment, and only nine of these have made progress across all tenets of the commitment, including breed. Two of these have achieved 100% compliance with the BCC: Campfire Treats (a dog treat company) and Ever More Dog Food ([Compassion in World Farming, 2023](#)). Compassion in World Farming reports that broader progress is being made, with 16 companies making "meaningful" progress<sup>5</sup> toward the BCC since 2022:

- Campfire Treats: Fully implemented the BCC
- Ever More Dog Food: Fully implemented the BCC
- Open Farm: 25% progress on breed, 100% on litter and lighting, and 70% on CAS
- Unilever: 18.3% progress on breed
- Applegate: 10% progress on breed and 50% progress on CAS
- Blue Apron: 100% progress on litter
- Chipotle: 100% progress on litter and enrichments
- Elior North America: 83% on litter
- Shake Shack: 100% progress on enrichment and 70% on lighting
- Pret a Manger: 90% progress on enrichment
- Hello Fresh: 84% progress on enrichment
- Panera Bread: 49% progress on enrichment
- Perdue: 37% progress on enrichment
- Blue Sushi, Sake, Grill: 21% progress on reducing stocking densities
- Nugget's Dog Food: 100% progress on CAS
- Giant Eagle: 19% progress on CAS

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<sup>5</sup> To be recognized as making "meaningful" progress, companies must report progress of greater than or equal to the following:

- Breed: 10%
- Stocking density: 20%
- Litter: 30%
- Lighting: 30%
- Enrichment: 10%
- Closed atmosphere stunning (CAS): 10%

In Europe, 55 companies are reporting their progress in implementing this commitment ([Compassion in Food Business, 2023](#)). One of these companies – Norsk Kylling – has fully implemented the European Chicken Commitment. The progress is broken down by sector in Table 7.

Table 7: Progress on implementing the Better Chicken Commitment in Europe by sector ([Compassion in Food Business, 2023](#))

Sector	Stocking density		Breed		Light		Enrichment		CAS		Overall transition <sup>6</sup>	
	Companies reporting <sup>7</sup>	Progress	Companies reporting <sup>6</sup>	Progress	Companies reporting <sup>6</sup>	Progress	Companies reporting <sup>6</sup>	Progress	Companies reporting <sup>6</sup>	Progress	Companies reporting <sup>6</sup>	Progress
Retailers and meal kits	16	30.6%	16	30.6%	16	37.2%	15	36.2%	11	52.8%	5	43% <sup>8</sup>
Food service and hospitality	6	16.4%	5	13.8%	6	46.8%	6	39%	5	26%	1 (SSP International)	4%
Restaurants	13	29.2%	12	12.3%	14	38.9%	14	43.5%	13	43.2%	1 (IKEA)	3%
Manufacturers	4	41.7%	4	19%	4	40.8%	5	34.8%	4	65.7%	N/A	N/A
Producers	2	21%	2	26.8%	2	34.5%	2	35%	2	30%	2	11.6%
Average		~28%		~21%		~40%		~38%		~44%		~15%

<sup>6</sup> Some companies report on overall transition as opposed to progress by each component.

<sup>7</sup> Not all companies reports on all criteria. We have also not included BCC third-party auditing as a component on our list where CIWF has so the number of companies reporting may not sum to 55 because of this.

<sup>8</sup> One company, REMA 1000 is already reporting 96% compliance.

The expected total enforcement rate of broiler welfare commitments is lower than that for cage-free campaigns, with our best estimate at 24% (1%-94%) ([Šimčikas, 2019](#)). We expect that the switch from fast-growing to slow-growing breeds will be the component most likely to be delayed or not enforced. This is supported by Table X as the least progress has been made towards this component so far.

## Are farmers able to implement our asks?

Table 7 in the section above shows that all the components of the BCC are implementable, but some are easier to implement than others. We expect the hardest component to be the switch from fast-growing to slow-growing breeds, but at least 39 companies in Europe and five companies in the US have made progress even on this issue.

## Evidence that the change has the expected welfare benefits

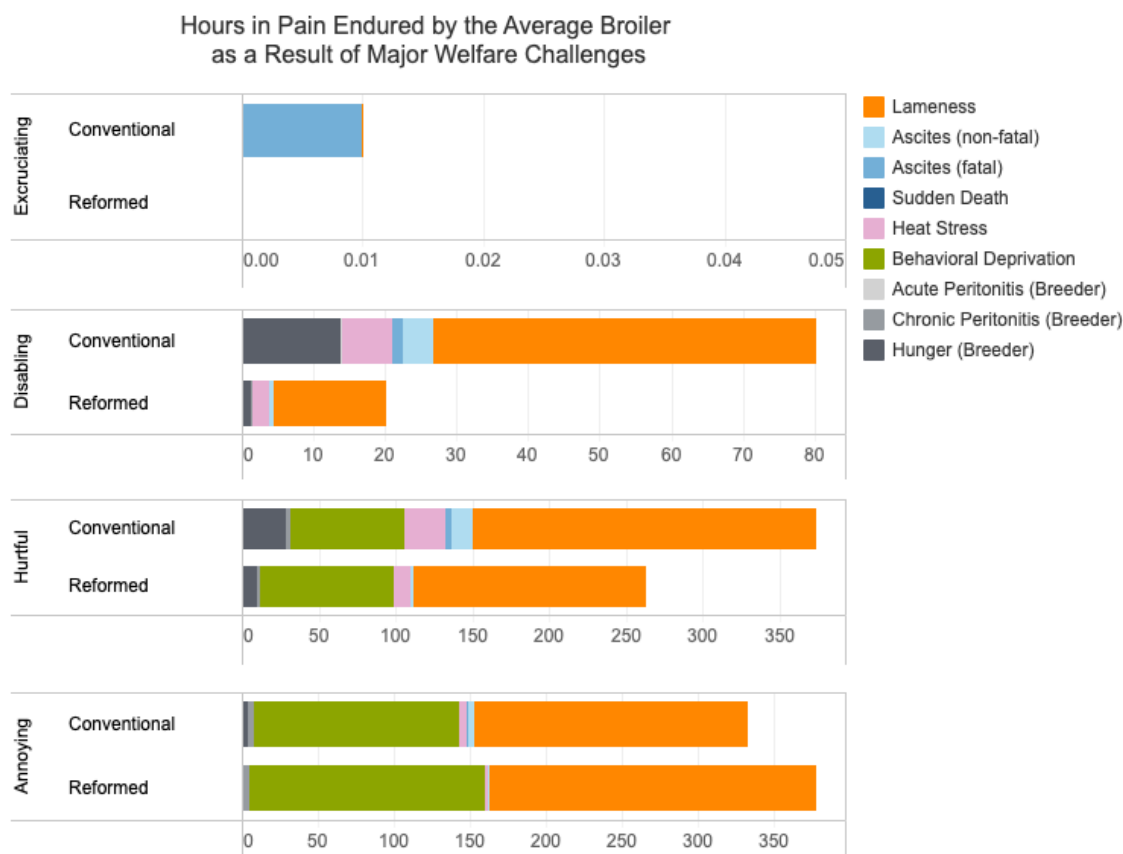
Broiler chickens have been bred to convert their feed as efficiently as possible, to grow as much breast meat as possible. This is at the expense of their welfare, where we have seen that these animals' internal organs cannot keep up with these growth rates and their legs are too weak to hold up their weight. As a result, we see a lot of broiler chickens become lame which leaves them on the floor of barns in their own manure where they suffer from sores, heat stress, and hunger ([Bollard, 2024](#)).

The Better Chicken Commitment attempts to tackle these major welfare issues, many of which are strongly associated with fast growth. Therefore, the most important factor of the commitment is the transition from fast-growing breeds to slow-growing breeds as the adoption of these slower-growing breeds not only reduces the incidences of these issues but also delays their onset ([Welfare Footprint Project, 2022](#)).

Overall, the Better Chicken Commitment is also very good for improving the lives of chickens. It is expected to reduce the suffering of broilers by ~37% ([Welfare Footprint Project, 2022](#)).

**Figure 2: Hours in pain endured by the average broiler as a result of major harms affecting commercial layers. "Conventional" is the current state of play, and "Reformed" is following the guidelines of the Better Chicken Commitment**





Although less research has been done on the promise of the Better Chicken Commitment, there is expert consensus and strong academic evidence from the Welfare Footprint Project which supports this campaign.

However, there is also some concern about the Better Chicken Commitment as it prolongs the time that each individual chicken spends on the farm by 14 days (from 42 days to 56 days which is an increase of 133.33%) due to the shift to slower-growing breeds. Overall we think that the Better Chicken Commitment still improves welfare on net and broilers farmed under BCC standards experience a shorter time in pain before slaughter compared to conventional standards despite the longer duration on farms – as shown by the Welfare Footprint Project ([Welfare Footprint Project, 2022](#)) – but perhaps the estimated 37% reduction in suffering should be discounted a bit to account for this concern.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> It is unclear whether this increased duration is appropriately accounted for in Welfare Footprint Project's model. In this model, if you increase the number of days alive it doesn't change the days in pain unless you increase the duration for each welfare issue respectively. So the fact that these chickens are alive for longer isn't innately bad unless the duration of welfare issues increases, but some people would think that being on the farm for longer (given they live net-negative lives) would be innately bad and this is not currently being captured.

## Cost-effectiveness analysis

When [modeling Better Chicken Commitment campaigns](#), we also add another adjustment when calculating the effects that is not applied when modeling cage-free campaigns. As a lot of the referenced numbers are from cage-free campaigning rather than broiler welfare campaigns, we thought that we needed an adjustment to account for the fact that we expect broiler welfare campaigns to be slower and harder to make progress on. We use an adjustment of 37.5% which is calculated from the expected enforcement rates of the two campaigns: 64% for cage-free and 24% for the BCC ([Šimčikas, 2019](#))

Based on our cost-effectiveness estimate, a new charity running new broiler welfare corporate campaigns in Central America does not look very cost-effective. With an average budget of ~\$400,000 per year at scale, the charity is expected to avert ~1.3-5.5 million SADs per year at scale. Discounting for future costs and benefits, the charity is expected to operate at an average cost-effectiveness of averting **~3 SADs/\$**.

Running broiler welfare campaigns in Ireland looks slightly more cost-effective, but still only moderately cost-effective averting **~10 SADs/\$**.